

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

from Dr. John Boreman, chairman of the Executive Steering Committee.

I'm pleased to share with you an important milestone in our ongoing effort to upgrade NMFS' recreational fishing data collection program. The attached Development Plan outlines a strategy to address the National Research Council's recommendations for solving the most critical questions facing recreational fisheries data collection and analysis, and ultimately support the management decisions affecting our nation's fisheries. This Development Plan was created with your input and successful implementation will require your continued participation.

I'd like to thank the nearly 100 scientists, managers, and members of the sportfishing community who participated in this process. Through a series of workshops, constituent conference calls, and personal reviews, we received a wide range of feedback and suggestions. While some suggestions may not be reflected in the final document, I assure you that all comments received careful consideration. Ultimately, our goal was to develop an inclusive, yet efficient plan for improving recreational fishing data collection programs.

Please take a moment to review the attached Development Plan. I think you will agree that the final document has benefited tremendously from public input. Notable improvements over earlier versions include; 1) a discussion of the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and its impact on survey redesign efforts, 2) expansion of the Executive Steering Committee (ESC) to be more inclusive of relevant agencies, 3) a more detailed description of the role of the Marine Fishery Advisory Committee in facilitating public participation, 4) an updated discussion of the Recreational Fisheries Economics Program to reflect the current status of that program's independent review, 5) additional language regarding contingency plans if funding is insufficient to support the ultimate redesign plan, 6) a discussion of the ESC's responsibility to form new workgroups or subgroups to meet emergent demands, and 7) an expanded list of ways in which progress and updates will be disseminated to the public.

I'm sure you'll have questions. To address some of the more common ones, we've prepared some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) based on the comments we received. We will have this plan and the FAQs posted on our public website next week, along with a means of providing e-mail feedback to us on the plan and follow-up activities.

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,
John Boreman
Chair, Executive Steering Committee
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